

Appl. No. 09/692,575
Amdt. dated 10/12/2005
Reply to Office Action of 07/12/2005

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A telecommunications system adapted to perform as a geographically-distributed call receiving center for an inbound telemarketing campaign while minimizing capital expenditures associated with constructing the telecommunications system, enhancing utilization levels of the call receiving center, the telecommunications system comprising at least the following:

a single, centralized hub having at least one call receiving unit for initially receiving and processing incoming telephone calls, a server coupled to the call receiving unit, and at least a first switch adapted to transfer ones of said calls for routing to a remote location corresponding to the number dialed for said calls;

a plurality of remote sites distributed to respective locations that are geographically remote from the hub, each site having a respective second switch adapted to receive ones of the calls as transferred from the first switch, at least one telephone receiver to enable live operators at the sites to receive the transferred calls from the second switch, and at least one server coupled at least to the second switch, wherein a respective parameter representing a peak hours of operation is associated with each one of the remote sites, wherein the respective parameters associated with corresponding ones of the remote sites are staggered relative to one another, wherein all of said calls are received by the hub and routed to given ones of the remote sites based on the parameter, thereby utilizing the hub more efficiently over time, and wherein capital assets located at the respective sites are minimized in favor of maximizing the capital assets located at the hub;

a first connectivity member coupled to provide voice communications between the hub and the sites so that the hub has a one-to-many relationship with the sites;

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a second connectivity member coupled to provide data communications between the hub and the sites, the server at the hub coupled to communicate with each of the servers at the sites via the second connectivity member; and

at least a third connectivity member coupled to provide a redundant voice communications link between the hub and the sites in the event that the first connectivity member fails; ;

wherein the incoming telephone calls received and processed at the hub are each assigned an internal Dialed Number Information Service (DNIS) that associates each of the calls with their proper remote sites;

wherein the first switch uses the internal DNIS associated with each of the calls to route the calls to their proper remote sites; and

wherein the hub is programmed to route each of the calls to their proper remote sites in an event of a system failure, based upon the internal DNIS associated with each of the calls.

2. (Original) The telecommunications system of claim 1, wherein the connectivity member comprises a telecommunications network.
3. (Original) The telecommunications system of claim 2, wherein the telecommunications network supports asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) communication.
4. (Original) The telecommunications system of claim 3, wherein the telecommunications network comprises a plurality of ATM transmission lines and ATM switches.
5. (Original) The telecommunications system of claim 1, wherein the hub is a call center front end having voice response functionality.
6. (Original) The telecommunications system of claim 5, wherein the call center front end includes at least one voice response unit (VRU).
7. (Original) The telecommunications system of claim 1, wherein the first switch supports asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) switching.

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8. (Original) The telecommunications system of claim 1, wherein the first switch supports frame relay switching.
9. (Previously presented) The telecommunications system of claim 1, wherein the remote sites are provided in a plurality of respective physical locations, at least some of the physical locations being different from that of the hub.
10. (Previously presented) The telecommunications system of claim 9, wherein the hub and at least one of the remote sites are separated by a distance of ten feet or more.
11. (Previously presented) The telecommunications system of claim 9, wherein the hub and at least one of the remote sites are separated by a distance of one mile or more.
12. (Previously presented) The telecommunications system of claim 9, wherein the hub and remote sites are both located in the United States, and wherein the hub is located in a different state of the United States than that of at least one of the remote sites.
13. (Previously presented) The telecommunications system of claim 1, wherein the remote sites are implemented as call center back ends, with each remote site having at least one live operator.
14. (Previously presented) The telecommunications system of claim 1, wherein at least one of the second switches supports asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) switching.
15. (Previously presented) The telecommunications system of claim 1, wherein at least one of the second switches supports frame relay switching.
16. (Previously presented) The telecommunications system of claim 13, wherein the call center back ends further comprise an automatic call distributor (ACD).
17. (Original) The telecommunications system of claim 1, wherein the hub includes a first server having computer telephone integration (CTI) capability.
18. (Original) The telecommunications system of claim 17, wherein the remote site includes a second server in communicative contact with the first server.
19. (Original) The telecommunications system of claim 18, wherein the first server and second server are connected by a telecommunications network.

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20. (Original) The telecommunications system of claim 19, wherein the telecommunications network is the connectivity member.

21. (Previously presented)) The telecommunications system of claim 1, further comprising a backup network providing telecommunications connectivity between the hub and at least one of the remote sites.

22. (Original) The telecommunications system of claim 21, wherein the backup network is a software defined network (SDN) provided by a telephone services carrier.

23. (Cancel) A method for providing a call center for handling incoming calls, the method comprising at least the following:

providing a hub for receiving the incoming calls from a telephone services carrier,
providing a plurality of remote sites at a plurality of locations different from that of the hub, the remote sites each having at least one respective terminal for processing incoming calls,
connecting the hub to the remote sites with a network connection so that the hub has a one-to-many relationship with the remote sites, and
transferring calls from the telephone services carrier to ones of the remote sites through the hub and the network connection.

24. (Cancel) A method for providing a call center for handling incoming calls while enhancing overall efficiency of the call center, the method comprising:

providing a call center hub for receiving the incoming calls from a telephone services carrier,
providing a plurality of remote call center sites at a plurality of locations that are selected based on availability of workforce to meet staffing needs at given ones of the call center, the remote sites each having at least one respective terminal for processing incoming calls,

connecting the call center hub to the remote call center sites with a network connection so as to achieve a one-to-many relationship between the call center hub and the remote call center sites,

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defining a plurality of parameters, each parameter representing a respective time of operation for respective ones of the remote call center sites, wherein at least some of the parameters represent staggered times of operation for the remote call center sites, and

transferring calls from the telephone services carrier to ones of the remote call center sites through the call center hub and the network connection, wherein the ones of the remote call center sites are selected based on the respective parameters applicable to the ones of the remote call center sites, thereby utilizing the call center hub in connection with the plurality of remote call center sites to enhance the overall efficiency of the call center.

25. (Cancel) A method for providing a call center for handling incoming calls while enhancing overall efficiency of the call center, the method comprising:

providing a call center hub for receiving the incoming calls from a telephone services carrier,

providing a plurality of remote call center sites at a plurality of locations that are selected based on availability of workforce to meet staffing needs at given ones of the call center, the remote sites each having at least one respective terminal for processing incoming calls,

connecting the call center hub to the remote call center sites with a network connection so as to achieve a one-to-many relationship between the call center hub and the remote call center sites, and

transferring calls from the telephone services carrier to ones of the remote call center sites through the call center hub and the network connection, thereby utilizing the call center hub in connection with the plurality of remote call center sites to enhance the overall efficiency of the call center.

26. (Cancel) A method for providing a call center for handling incoming calls while optimizing capital expenditure associated with supporting the call center, the method comprising:

providing a call center hub for receiving the incoming calls from a telephone services carrier,

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providing a plurality of remote call center sites at a plurality of locations different from that of the call center hub, the remote sites each having at least one respective terminal for processing incoming calls,

minimizing capital assets located at the respective remote call center sites in favor of maximizing the capital assets located at the call center hub,

connecting the call center hub to the remote call center sites with a network connection so as to achieve a one-to-many relationship between the call center hub and the remote call center sites, and

transferring calls from the telephone services carrier to ones of the remote call center sites through the call center hub and the network connection.

27. (Cancel) The method of claim 26, further comprising defining a plurality of parameters, each parameter representing a respective time of operation for respective ones of the remote call center sites, wherein at least some of the parameters represent staggered times of operation for the remote call center sites.

28. (Cancel) The method of claim 27, further comprising selecting ones of the remote call center sites to receive the calls from the telephone services carrier based on the respective parameters applicable to the ones of the remote call center sites, thereby utilizing the call center hub in connection with the plurality of remote call center sites to enhance the overall efficiency of the call center.

29. (Cancel) The method of claim 26, wherein providing a plurality of remote call center sites includes providing a plurality of remote call center sites at a plurality of locations that are selected based on availability of workforce to meet staffing needs at given ones of the call center, the remote sites each having at least one respective terminal for processing incoming calls.

30. (Cancel) A method for providing a call center for handling incoming calls while enhancing overall efficiency of the call center, the method comprising:

providing a single call center hub for receiving the incoming calls from a telephone services carrier,

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providing a plurality of remote call center sites at a plurality of locations different from that of the call center hub, the remote sites each having at least one respective terminal for processing incoming calls,

connecting the call center hub to the remote call center sites with a network connection so as to achieve a one-to-many relationship between the call center hub and the remote call center sites,

defining a plurality of parameters, each parameter representing a respective time of operation for respective ones of the remote call center sites, wherein at least some of the parameters represent staggered times of operation for the remote call center sites, and

transferring calls from the telephone services carrier to ones of the remote call center sites through the call center hub and the network connection, wherein the ones of the remote call center sites are selected based on the respective parameters applicable to the ones of the remote call center sites, thereby utilizing the call center hub in connection with the plurality of remote call center sites to enhance the overall efficiency of the call center.

31. (Cancel) The telecommunications system of claim 1, wherein each of the remote call center sites have associated therewith a respective parameter representing a respective time of operation for the respective remote call center sites.

32. (Cancel) The telecommunications system of claim 31, wherein the parameters represent staggered times of operation defined for the remote call center sites.

32. (Cancel) The telecommunications system of claim 32, wherein the hub is adapted to select a given remote call center site to receive a given call based on the respective parameter associated with the given remote call center site.

33. (Cancel) The telecommunications system of claim 1, wherein the hub comprises a single hub.

34. (Cancel) The method of claim 23, wherein providing a hub includes providing a single hub.

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35. (Cancel) The method of claim 24, wherein providing a call center hub includes providing a single call center hub.
36. (Cancel) The method of claim 25, wherein providing a call center hub includes providing a single call center hub.
37. (Cancel) The method of claim 26, wherein providing a call center hub includes providing a single call center hub.
38. (Cancel) The telecommunications system of claim 1, wherein the hub includes at least one voice response unit (VRU) adapted to route the incoming telephone calls based at least in part on:

respective external DNIS parameters that are received from at least one carrier transporting the telephone calls, and that are associated with respective ones of the incoming calls; and

respective internal DNIS parameters assigned to given ones of the incoming calls by the VRU and used to route the incoming calls to ones of the remote sites.

39. (Cancel) The method of claim 23, further comprising providing least one voice response unit (VRU) and adapting the VRU to route the incoming calls based at least in part on:
 - respective external DNIS parameters that are received from at least one carrier transporting the telephone calls, and that are associated with respective ones of the incoming calls; and

respective internal DNIS parameters assigned to given ones of the incoming calls by the VRU and used to route the incoming calls to ones of the remote sites.

40. (Cancel) A method for handling incoming calls received by a call center, the method comprising at least the following:

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receiving the incoming calls from a telephone services carrier at a hub provided as part of the call center;

processing respective data associated with the incoming calls to determine to which ones of a plurality of remote sites the incoming calls should be routed, wherein the remote sites are configured in a many-to-one relationship with the hub; and

transferring the incoming calls to ones of the remote sites in response to the processing.

41. (Cancel) The method of claim 40, wherein receiving the incoming calls includes receiving the incoming calls at a single hub.
42. (Cancel) The method of claim 40, wherein processing respective data includes receiving respective external DNIS parameters that are associated with respective ones of the incoming calls from at least one carrier transporting the telephone calls, assigning respective internal DNIS parameters to given ones of the incoming calls, and routing the incoming calls to ones of the remote sites in response to the internal DNIS parameters.